*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Mali**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2017/1105)**

**The President**: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/1105, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lacroix.

**Mr. Lacroix** (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to introduce the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/1105) on the situation in Mali to the members of the Security Council, and update them on the most recent developments concerning the political and security situation in the country.

I would also like to welcome the presence today of the new Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, whom I warmly congratulate on his appointment. I should like to convey through the Minister to the new Government our every wish for its success, and to reiterate to him our readiness and that of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to support him in his work, especially with regard to the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

The adoption of a timeline for implementing urgent measures within the framework of the Peace Agreement at the last meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee on 15 and 16 January was an important step. That timeline includes an entire series of measures that should allow progress with regard to institutional measures, including, in particular ensuring that the Territorial Communities Code conforms with the Peace Agreement, and the operationalization of the interim authorities and the transitional electoral colleges, as well as the local Governments in the Ménaka and Taoudénni regions, by March. The timeline could also help advance security arrangements, including the operationalization of the Operational Coordination Mechanisms of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu, the finalization of the criteria for the integration of former combatants into the armed and security forces, the further development of security sector reform strategy and the establishment of security conditions for the upcoming elections. The timetable could finally revive development for the northern regions.

However, with the holding of presidential elections, scheduled for mid-July, less than six months away, it is now important that the Government and the signatory movements make every effort to respect that new timetable. Almost a year ago, on 10 February 2017, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, His Excellency Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, as chief mediator, presided over a high-level ministerial meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, which resulted in a road map for installing the interim authorities and initiating joint patrols, as well as the establishment of a permanent consultation framework comprised of the signatory parties, international mediators and key partners. Unfortunately, it is clear today that those measures have not been followed up.

I welcome the fact that the first trip by Mr. Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga, the new Prime Minister of Mali, appointed on 30 December, was slated for Algeria, the lead mediator. We hope that consultations with the Algerian authorities will give awaited impetus to talks with the other signatory parties with a view to overcoming the differences observed over the past several months. In particular, I highlight the controversy related to the Territorial Communities Code, as well as persistent divergences concerning the issue of quota requirements for the integration of former combatants into the armed and security forces, which are essential for the launch of the cantonment and security sector reform.

It is also hoped that constructive consultations among the parties, following the meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee of January 15 and 16, will enable them, in the days to come, to adhere to the timetable agreed at that meeting. That is essential to ensuring coherence between the Peace Agreement and the legal framework concerning decentralization and to laying the groundwork for the holding of local and regional elections in April 2018 in an optimal security conditions.

In the same vein, I would like to encourage the signatory parties to dedicate the coming months to developing a road map articulating their vision for new Malian defence and security institutions and the various stages of the reform. A consensus on the next steps would enable the launching of the cantonment and demobilization, disarmament and reintegration processes and thereby help reduce insecurity in the northern regions.

Time is short, and we are facing a constant race against time in Mali. We are facing increasing insecurity that has unfortunately cost the lives of hundreds of civilians in the northern and central parts of the country, as well as dozens of members of the Malian defence and security forces, Blue Helmets and contingents of Operation Barkhane over the past year. We are also facing a worsening human rights and humanitarian situations in the country. The fact that, after more than two years following the signing of the peace agreement, the northern development strategy project has not been adopted means that a large percentage of those living in the north has been deprived of long-awaited peace dividends. Humanitarian actors estimate that by 2018, 4.1 million Malians — or 22 per cent of the population — will be food insecure. The estimated percentage is even higher for the northern and central regions where 30 to 40 per cent of the population would be affected.

As members of the Security Council saw for themselves during their visit in October 2017, the challenges remain considerable, and, as I have said, our goal must be to establish conditions conducive to the holding of elections and, beyond them, pursuing the peace process. To that end, I encourage the Government to launch the implementation of the agreement's key measures — decentralization and security sector reform — in a concerted and inclusive manner. In that regard, I would like to assure the Government of the continued support of MINUSMA, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, who is sparing no effort in exercising his good offices.

(*spoke in English*)

As was previously mentioned, the report under consideration highlights the continued worsening of the situation in the centre of the country with the highest number of terrorist attacks documented in the Mopti region. The Government is making efforts in that regard. Prime Minister Maïga convened a Cabinet meeting devoted to addressing insecurity in the central region and the national coordination body's integrated plan for securing the centre of the country is now operational. For its part, MINUSMA has enhanced its support for the Malian defence and security forces in central Mali following the signature of the memorandum of understanding with the Government on 8 November. The Mission is helping upgrade the security of six Malian armed forces bases for an estimated cost of $1 million, as well as continuing to assist with casualty and medical evacuations.

I would also like to welcome the progress made in the operationalization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), which has launched its second operation, as well as the establishment by the G-5 Sahel secretariat of a coordination cell to provide political oversight to the operations of the Joint Force. As recommended by the Secretary-General in his October report (S/2017/811), we would also advise that the groupe de soutien be activated to ensure unity of vision and purpose among all stakeholders. Meanwhile, consultations for the conclusion of the technical agreement among the G-5 Sahel, the United Nations and the European Union are progressing, and we intend to work closely with the European Union and the African Union on a joint resource mobilization strategy before the donors conference of 23 February in Brussels in accordance with the provisions of resolution 2391 (2017).

Development partners are also stepping up their efforts. Since October 2017, the Peace Building Fund launched four projects focused on the Mopti and Ségou regions for a total of $8 million. Those projects are aimed at enhancing the participation of women and youth in reconciliation efforts and preventing intercommunity conflicts, including by restoring traditional conflict mediation mechanisms. However, most of those initiatives remain in the inception phase, and have yet

to produce significant changes on the ground. For the future, central Mali is likely to command sustained attention and become an increasingly prominent feature in peace and reconciliation efforts.

The upcoming presidential elections will mark the beginning of a new chapter in the stabilization of Mali. The modest achievements made to date in the implementation of the Peace Agreement that forms the cornerstone of the Mission's mandate, the entry into function of the independent observer, the operationalization of the sanctions regime, the establishment of the international commission of inquiry, the upcoming presidential elections, the continued security risks facing our personnel on the ground, the growth of insecurity spanning towards the centre of the country and the deployment of a new regional force by the G-5 Sahel make the independent review requested by the Secretary-General particularly timely.

Allow me here to welcome the participation of the Carter Center, for the first time, in the Agreement Monitoring Committee meeting held last week, the recent nomination of the Panel of Experts mandated by resolution 2374 (2017) and the Secretary-General's decision to establish the international commission of inquiry, of which he informed the Security Council by letter yesterday. The independent observer will identify blockages, apportion responsibility and make recommendations for the way forward. The Panel of Experts will support the Committee in identifying and imposing sanctions against individuals hampering the implementation of the agreement. It will also help to shed light on the links between international organized crime, terrorist groups and signatory armed groups. The International Commission of Inquiry will investigate serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed in Mali since January 2012. Its establishment represents an important step forward in the implementation of the justice and reconciliation measures outlined in the Agreement, and in efforts to fight impunity.

Five years after the Mission's establishment and two and a half years after the signature of the peace agreement, we believe the time has come to re-assess the assumptions about MINUSMA's presence, review its key mandated tasks against its achievements on the ground and re-examine the Mission's layout for a comprehensive strategic review. I must note that resolution 2364 (2017) had requested that MINUSMA develop within six months a mission-wide prioritization plan articulating a phased approach to mandate implementation and a transition plan. However, we felt that to ensure maximum impact, it would be important that the two plans be informed by the findings of the strategic review to be conducted in the coming weeks. We therefore believe that the two plans will remain living documents until the conclusion of the strategic review can be incorporated. In the meantime, MINUSMA continues to focus on core-mandated tasks, with notable achievement in its good offices and the protection of civilian efforts.

In spite of persisting capability gaps, including for crucial assets, such as helicopters, MINUSMA is pursuing its effort to project the robust posture mandated by the Security Council. Since the beginning of the year, peacekeepers repelled three attacks against one position in Kidal region and one ambush in Mopti region, and three improvised explosive devices exploded against Mission vehicles. I am pleased to report that such attacks resulted in only minor injuries to two peacekeepers. We also note that the mitigation measures implemented by the Mission are having a positive impact. However, such endeavours are long-term. The review on peacekeeping fatalities recently conducted by Lieutenant General Cruz and our plan of action highlight the importance of enhancing our efforts and ensuring that all peacekeepers receive the training and equipment necessary to operate in such hostile conditions. We are currently working with MINUSMA to take all necessary measures to implement the recommendations outlined in that report.

**The President**: I thank Mr. Lacroix for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for his briefing, which, as usual, was very clear, and again highlighted that the situation in Mali is at a determining juncture.

I would also like to warmly welcome the Malian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, and thank him for traveling to New York to participate in our work. It is an important gesture that France and, I believe, all members of the Council appreciate.

More than two and a half years after the signature of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, it must be acknowledged that much remains to be done to ensure its full implementation. Indeed, it has an impact on the ground. Now, more than ever, it is time for all parties to make headway in honouring their respective commitments. It is all the more important now that there is a small window of opportunity ahead of the 2018 elections in Mali. The security situation in the north and centre of the country remains a source of genuine concern for all. Without progress, all of the gains made thus far, as well as the very relevance of the agreement, will be called into question.

Sustainable development in the Sahel will be impossible without the full implementation of the Malian peace agreement. In that regard, France welcomes the renewed commitment on the part of Malian Government and signatory movements to implement all provisions of the peace agreement, through the adoption a few days ago of an emergency plan with a specific calendar to ensure that, by March, each party will have honoured its commitments. It is an encouraging step forward that has been eagerly waited for some time. It should allow for considerable short-term progress to be made in implementing the agreement. We must move from words to deeds and ensure that commitments are upheld with specific measures on the ground. It is particularly important for progress to be made in the area of decentralization, by conducting a consensus-based review of legislation with regard to decentralization, adopting a law to establish a regional police force and providing interim authorities with the human, technical and financial resources required to fulfil their mission.

The launching of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is also a priority, given the eligibility criteria and quotas for combatants. In the coming weeks we will continue to monitor the various points closely, in conjunction with Malian stakeholders. France also encourages the Malian authorities to make headway in the fight against impunity. It calls upon all parties to end human rights violations.

In accordance with the terms of the peace agreement, the Council must take the necessary measures that will encourage the parties to uphold their commitments. The adoption in September 2017 of resolution 2374 (2017), establishing a sanctions regime for Mali, was the first step in that direction. Additional measures should be envisaged if the recent commitments made by the parties are not honoured, including imposing sanctions on individuals who hamper the implementation of the agreement. France is ready to shoulder its responsibility in that area. The future reports of the Panel of Experts and the independent observer, whose appointments we welcome, will lay the foundation to move in that direction if need be. All Malian parties must shoulder their responsibilities.

The countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) continue to work together to combat the existential threat that terrorism poses to their peoples and States. Last week, another step was made to make the G-5 Sahel Joint Force operational by launching a specific road map for troop deployment, command transfers and future operations. Now more than ever, the goal is to send swift and positive signals about the path to stability in the G-5 Sahel countries by confirming, in particular, the return of Government and public services throughout the country.

In New York, our priority must be to do our utmost to ensure that the technical agreement outlined in resolution 2391 (2017) can be signed at the international donors' conference to be held on 23 February in Brussels, in order to gather the necessary resources to finance the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to the Joint Force. It will be achieved by a mechanism hosted by the European Union and should be fed by international contributions, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 2391 (2017).

Finally, a solid framework that promotes respect for human rights remains an important prerequisite for the success of the joint force. We therefore encourage the G-5 Sahel countries to establish, as soon as possible, the compliance framework outlined in resolution 2391 (2017) so as to build on progress made in that area in the coming weeks. It is the best way to ensure that MINUSMA can support the joint force, in accordance the United Nations human rights criteria.

In spite of all its challenges, MINUSMA, along with other security forces on the ground, remains a crucial element for ensuring Mali's stability. In the short term, our responsibility is to mobilize to provide MINUSMA with all the means it needs to fulfil the robust mandate it has received from the Council. The priority in that regard lies in the immediate deployment on the ground of adapted capacities in order to endow the force with its full operational strength in the coming months. Lasting solutions must be found quickly so as

to adequately equip contingents with armored vehicles, medium-term aerial capacities and armored convoys.

Finally, the strategic review of MINUSMA to take place in the coming weeks will provide us with an opportunity for more long-term consideration of the future of the Mission and its coordination with other security forces in place, first and foremost among which is the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. Mali and the Sahel are optimal theatres for building the future of peacekeeping. They offer us the opportunity to work to establish a virtuous coordination between a United Nations and an African operation. That will be possible, however, only if both enjoy the necessary tools and support from the international community.

As I have already had the opportunity to underscore this morning, it is now urgent to make progress towards the full implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. It is the Council's responsibility to send a strong message of encouragement to the Malian parties in that regard. France will today submit a proposal to the other members of the Council on a draft presidential statement to that end.

**Mr. Llorentty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia thanks Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing.

We join our colleagues from France in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

At the outset, I wish to highlight the political progress made in Mali. We note with some hope that the consolidation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali is moving ahead with essential steps that will without doubt also encourage the Security Council, the international community and, of course, the Malian people and Government to pursue their efforts in favour of peace and lasting stability in that brotherly country.

In that regard, we note the definitive cessation of hostilities between the armed groups through the signature of the document of commitments, which provides for a resumption of dialogue towards the full implementation of the peace and reconciliation agreement and an increase in confidence-building measures for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the fighters. Furthermore, we note the latest meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee in Bamako, which took place early last week and at which the parties agreed a revised, prioritized schedule for the implementation of the pending provisions of the peace and reconciliation agreement, to be undertaken by the end of March. We consider these commitments to be an important initiative that must be secured in a decisive way. We welcome the efforts of the Government and the President of the Republic of Mali to achieve the definitive cessation of hostilities through national plans and the taking of fundamental policy measures to achieve peace and stability in their country.

It is important to reiterate and recognize that the impact of the Libyan conflict on the security situation in the region is a direct consequence of interventionist practices and policies of regime change that have had a collateral effect in the Sahel, engendering a rise in chaos and terrorism, with regrettable results that continue to reverberate to this day.

We view with concern that asymmetric terrorist attacks perpetrated with small arms and improvised explosive devices continue to threaten the integrity and life of the civilian population, the Malian security forces, State authorities and the members of MINUSMA, not to mention the fact that they have propagated and entrenched the presence and consequences of transnational crime in the subregion.

We therefore consider it necessary to highlight and recognize the tasks undertaken by the personnel of the MINUSMA, which has stepped up its work in for the final implementation of the peace agreement by monitoring and facilitating the political dialogue through mediation and good offices, in coordination with the Malian Government. We commend the activities of the Mission in the provision of technical, logistical and security advice for the preparation of future electoral processes in Mali. Furthermore, we attach importance to the signing of the memorandum of understanding with the Malian Government, which will offer support to the armed forces in the areas of operations, intelligence, medical evacuation, the elimination and handling of explosive artifacts, demining and the protection of civilians.

However, despite all the efforts carried out by the Mission, we are concerned about the ongoing lack of material, logistical and technological capabilities that would allow it to efficiently and effectively fulfil its mandate in a volatile and asymmetric environment.

On the other hand, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate due to violent terrorist attacks, with their collateral and very grave effects, which have increased the number of internally displaced and refugees in border countries. Another collateral effect we would note is food insecurity, which keeps hundreds of thousands of people at risk, among them more than 10,000 children suffering severe malnutrition. Vulnerability remains highest among minors, who are marginalized and deprived of their fundamental rights, including to education, due to the closure of hundreds of schools as a result of terrorist threats.

In that respect, it is clear that the security situation in Mali and the Sahel still presents great challenges. Bolivia highlights the essential efforts carried out by the regional and subregional organizations, led by the African Union, in cooperation and coordination with the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, which we consider to be critical to the fight against transnational criminal groups and to providing broader and better security conditions to the civilian population.

To conclude, we urge the international community in general to pursue its efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability in Mali. We believe that support for the Malian Government is the fundamental pillar that should motivate us to achieve definitive peace, in strict respect for and dedication to its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

**Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing on the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/1105) on progress made in the political process in Mali and the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Before I go on, I wish to hail the presence among us of His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mali. I ask him to accept the Ivorian delegation's welcome and its congratulations on his new assigment to lead the Malian diplomatic corps.

Mr. Lacroix's briefing described a situation of contrasts that calls for the Council's ongoing vigilance and strengthened support for MINUSMA in the implementation of its mandate. My country attaches the highest importance to developments in the situation in Mali, in particular the political process, and welcomes the efforts and resolve of the Government to promote the comprehensive and inclusive implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which is the sole framework for resolving the crisis in that country. My delegation shares the conclusions of the Secretary-General on the need for the Malian parties to step up their implementation of the Agreement, which has been delayed significantly. This could threaten the holding of upcoming local and presidential elections. Time is running out and the implementation of the peace agreement by the next elections will be key to ensuring a peaceful and credible electoral process.

With MINUSMA's support, focus should be placed on the redeployment of the Administration; decentralization; security sector reform; and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. In that regard, we encourage the Agreement Monitoring Committee to fully play its role and to lead the Malian parties to resolutely assume ownership of the Algiers road map. The presence of Algeria, the leader of the international mediation efforts, and the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General as observers in the Agreement Monitoring Committee is an important step forward and a sign of openness that will strengthen the Committee's effectiveness.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the Malian Government's determination to involve neighbouring countries, in particular Algeria, in implementing the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. In this connection, the Council should encourage the region and the neighbouring countries of Mali to work closely with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif to reach a definitive solution to the crisis in Mali.

My delegation welcomes the cessation of hostilities agreement signed on 20 September 2017 by the various signatory movements of the peace agreement and encourages the stakeholders to ensure its effective implementation in order to contribute to improving the security situation in the country. However, Côte d'Ivoire is worried about the serious deterioration of the security situation in the centre of the country and the real risks of the terrorist attacks spreading to the south. In this regard, my delegation calls for the operationalization of MINUSMA's rapid reaction force as soon as possible and for the fulfilment of the Mission's need for helicopters.

Côte d'Ivoire also calls on Member States to make available to MINUSMA appropriate means

to secure the camps and convoys against attacks by terrorists groups, which have cost the lives of too many peacekeepers deployed in Mali. Furthermore, my country urges MINUSMA and the partners of Mali to support the efforts of the Government in the context of the deployment of Malian defence and security forces, in particular to the north and centre of the country. We must ensure that the Government of Mali has the necessary support its army needs in order to protect the people and territory of Mali. The presence of these forces will prevent a the armed groups from becoming permanently entrenched and, as a result, it will prevent to the perpetration human rights violations. It will also facilitate the redeployment of the Administration and essential social services.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the signing on 8 November 2017 of the agreement memorandum with the Malian Government in order to ensure MINUSMA's support for the Malian armed forces, in particular in the area of strengthening logistical and operational capabilities, exchanges of information and intelligence, medical evacuations and the deactivation of explosives and munitions. Peace and security and in Mali will be lasting only if terrorist groups and criminals are neutralized. For this to happen, it will depend on the effectiveness of the force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) in its war against the terrorist groups.

Côte d'Ivoire is delighted about the convergence of views and the unity of action of Council members regarding the support of MINUSMA to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force and calls on the Council to go even further in ensuring its support so that we can make sure that MINUSMA does not continue to be the target of terrorist attacks. Côte d'Ivoire hopes that, in accordance with resolution 2391 (2017), the technical agreement between the United Nations, the European Union and the G-5 Sahel countries will be signed.

The Ivorian delegation welcomes the progress achieved in the implementation of MINUSMA'S mandate in an increasingly complex environment. However, we would like to express our serious concerns about the ongoing serious human rights violations, in particular in the north and centre of Mali, as well as the increasing asymmetric attacks against MINUSMA personnel.

Looking beyond the security situation, my country commends the commitment of MINUSMA and the Government of Mali to the implementation of the road map in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular by reducing inequalities and eliminating poverty in order to improve the living conditions of the people of Mali. Côte d'Ivoire agrees with the Secretary-General that it is necessary to address the root causes of the conflict to build a foundation for peace and security.

In conclusion, my country would like to reiterate that there can be no military solution to the crisis in Mali and that the parties should commit themselves resolutely to implementing in good faith the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, which is the solution that was chosen by the people of Mali themselves. Côte d'Ivoire believes in the capacity of all the parties to overcome their differences in the interest of the people and nation of Mali.

**Mr. Skoog** (Sweden): I want to begin by thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his comprehensive briefing to the Council today and express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his report (S/2017/1105) and to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mr. Annadif and his team for their excellent work on the ground. I also want to welcome and express my appreciation for the presence today in the Council of Minister Coulibaly.

It has now been over two and a half years since the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali was signed. Progress on its implementation has been mixed, yet tangible progress in the peace process is the only way to achieve lasting stability in Mali and indeed in the region. This is all the more urgent in light of the grave security situation, characterized by increased and intense fire attacks by terrorists groups. It is clear that only a comprehensive approach, anchored in the peace process and which addresses is the root causes of violence and instability, will resolve the security situation in Mali in a lasting way.

We welcome the adoption of the revised timetable for the implementation of the peace agreement. The agreement represents a closing window of opportunity which, if not grasped, would undermine the progress already made and put into question the potential for peace and reconciliation. It is therefore essential that the parties honour their commitments under the peace agreement in good faith, in a concrete and substantive way and without further delay.

As part of this, they should engage in confidence-building measures. This is critical not

least to prepare the ground for credible and inclusive elections due to take place in 2018. Greater national ownership of the key institutional reforms envisaged in the peace agreement is essential. We call on all parties to play their part, in particular to ensure progress in the decentralization and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and the security sector reform processes. We hope that the newly appointed Prime Minister Maïga will fully assume his responsibilities and lead the way in an inclusive manner.

With the recent appointment of the Carter Center in the role of independent observer and the establishment of the sanctions regime last year, all the tools needed to support the implementation process of the peace agreement are now in place. Albeit different in nature, those tools all serve to assist and to help the parties in their endeavours. We encourage them to support them and to use them as they go about their work.

The full representation of women in the decision-making structures related to the peace process has been lacking. Yet women have an important role to play in the implementation of the peace agreement. We welcome the recent steps by the mediation group of the Agreement's follow-up mechanism, the Agreement Monitoring Committee, to consult more with women. It is important that that dialogue be continued and that the inclusion of women in the peace process be further institutionalized.

The human rights situation in Mali continues to be of serious concern, not least due to the expansion of violent extremist groups. The Malian Government has the responsibility to ensure accountability for human rights abuses and access to justice for all, including by prioritizing the reconciliation and justice measures of the peace agreement. We welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to establish the International Commission of Inquiry to investigate the allegations of abuse and serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including the allegations of conflict-related sexual violence committed on the territory of Mali since 1 January 2012.

We welcome the continued support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to the operationalization of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission and the high number of additional statements submitted to the Commission, although we are concerned that progress remains slow. The severe human rights situation also highlights the significance of a robust compliance framework for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), which should be operationalized promptly.

We look forward to receiving further information on the transition plan for MINUSMA and on the recommendations for the upcoming strategic review. That is an important exercise, coming five years after the inception of the Mission, and provides an opportunity to reflect, including by revisiting its configuration and geographical distribution.

We join the Secretary-General in commending the commitment of the States members of the G-5 Sahel to addressing threats to peace and security in the region through the establishment of the joint force. We see the potential of the force to contribute to an enabling environment that increases security. Given the complementarity roles of the G-5 Sahel force and MINUSMA, it is important that United Nations support to the joint force through MINUSMA not affect the Mission's capacity to implement its mandate and strategic priorities.

By redoubling their efforts to implement the peace agreement, the parties in Mali can help to ensure successful elections later this year. That, in turn, has the potential to reinvigorate the peace process and to create the conditions for State authority to be extended across the whole of the country. It is very important that all parties to the Agreement remain committed and intensify their efforts for successful implementation.

MINUSMA continues to have an important role to play in support of national efforts inside Mali. We are proud to support its work with our largest current military troop contribution to any international mission, as well as with police and civilian staff. Sweden remains committed to supporting a peaceful, resilient and inclusive Mali for all its citizens.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his very useful briefing. I would also like to welcome the presence of Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

Peru notes with concern the situation in Mali. As a non-permanent member of the Council, we hope

to contrbute to strengthening the commitment of the international community to national actors with a view to supporting their efforts to achieve sustainable peace in that country. We believe that the humanitarian situation facing the civilian population is serious, as is the recurrence of heinous violations of human rights in Mali, in particular in the central and northern regions owing to the actions of terrorist groups, clashes between the various armed groups and a lack of State presence.

Peru recognizes and supports the work carried out by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) amid an adverse environment and in complex operational situations. I would now like to briefly mention the political and security aspects, in which it is urgent to make progress with greater speed.

First, on the political front, almost three years since the signing of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, it is necessary to make it a reality. The establishment of a timetable for that is a step in the right direction. However, it is necessary to accelerate the pace. The holding of free and transparent elections is a central objective, which must have strong regional and international support. An increased participation of women and young people should help to build and strengthen the inclusive institutions required to sustain peace. We also believe it important to move forward as soon as possible with the constitutional review process in order to establish the necessary order for national institutions to provide security and justice in the country, in line with the peace and reconciliation agreement.

Along those lines, we welcome the recent decision of the Secretary-General to establish the International Commission of Inquiry and to request the Malian authorities to look into abuses and violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law, including conflict-related sexual violence. We support the fight against impunity and implementation of the rule of law in Mali.

Secondly, in the area of security, Peru highlights the importance of adopting a regional perspective that addresses in an integrated and multidimensional way the root causes of the conflict, including the link between terrorism and drug trafficking, organized crime, human trafficking and other criminal activities. We also emphasize the need to move forward with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for former combatants and to create decent employment to prevent the resurgence of violence.

Peru considers the mandate given to MINUSMA to provide operational and logistical support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five of the Sahel to be positive. At the same time, we believe that the operational capabilities of the Mission should be strengthened. We note with concern that the entire authorized force has not yet been deployed and that there is a significant deficit in its equipment. In that regard, we highlight the need to guarantee the safety of the Blue Helmets on the ground. Mali represents one of the most dangerous environments. That is why we support the Secretary-General's decision to address that cross-cutting issue of many peacekeeping operations.

To conclude, we believe that sustainable development is inseparable from peace and security. In that regard, it could be of interest to include in future reports figures for economic growth, which have been good, with social indicators that give a clearer idea of the challenges facing Mali in the area of sustainable development, which we all support.

**Mr. Alotaibi** (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would first like to thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Lacroix for his very useful briefing on recent events in Mali. I would also like to join my colleagues in welcoming Mr. Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali. It goes without saying that the presence among us of Mr. Coulibaly demonstrates the Malian Government's commitment to finding an appropriate solution to the current situation.

We warmly welcome the positive measures taken by the Government in the areas of defence, justice, security and economic development. We encourage it to continue with such measures and to step up its efforts to implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We call on all the parties to cooperate and participate in the process in order to ensure the implementation of the agreement and to address the common terrorist threat.

In that context, we support the amended timeline for the implementation of the agreement agreed to by the signatory parties at the most recent meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee in the capital of Mali, Bamako, on 16 January. We urge all the parties to implement the outstanding parts of the Agreement in accordance with the established timetable.

We deplore the extremely worrying deterioration of the situation in Mali. We commend the efforts of the peacekeepers, who risk their lives every day in their efforts to maintain peace and security in a dangerous environment, and 42 of whom died in 2017. It will be crucial to identify and address the underlying causes of the conflict if it is to be contained. Kuwait supports the commitment of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the coalition of armed groups to the ceasefire since the signing of the latest agreement on 20 September. We call on all the parties to work to improve the security situation as quickly as possible.

We have been attentively and worriedly following the increases in terrorist attacks, the spread of extremist ideas and the targeting of peacekeepers and Malian security forces. We firmly condemn the terrorist activity in the region and emphasize the importance of the efforts of the Joint Force of the Group of Five (G-5) for the Sahel in fighting terrorism, ensuring border security and combating transborder crime. With regard to the Joint Force, we support resolution 2391 (2017) and call on the G-5 countries and the United Nations to put the finishing touches on the technical agreement aimed at facilitating the Joint Force's efforts, an initiative that is a successful, positive model of regional ownership in combating the various transborder threats. We welcome the active efforts in that regard of the Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Mali and commend their valuable contributions to the Joint Force.

Despite the current political situation and the deteroriating security conditions, Mali is seeing promising improvements in its economic development, according to the most recent briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, on 11 January (see S/PV.8156). We support the Government of Mali's efforts to cooperate with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in implementing projects aimed at creating job opportunities for the people of Mali and improving its economic situation. We also support the efforts to finalize a formula for the Government's plan for the Sustainable Development Goals. We wish the friendly people of Mali a prosperous future and reiterate our commitment to working with the other members of the Council to help them reach their goals. The country's economic development has created an opportunity for resolving various outstanding social and economic issues, and we call on the Government of Mali, with the support of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and MINUSMA, to pursue and promote that development by implementing the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, newly revitalized under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed.

We support the Secretary-General's decision to establish an International Commission of Inquiry in Mali, as expressed in a letter sent yesterday to the members of the Council, which says that the Commission of Inquiry will address flagrant violations and abuses of international human rights and international humanitarian law, including sexual violence related to the conflict, in accordance with the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation and with resolution 2364 (2017). We are committed to supporting the Secretary-General in his efforts to combat human rights violations.

Lastly, we commend the efforts of Special Representative Annadif and MINUSMA and affirm the importance of their role in stabilizing the situation and ensuring security for civilians. We emphasize the importance of their efforts to give technical, logistical and advisory support to the Government of Mali. We wish the Government every success in holding local and presidential elections this year and encourage it to ensure that elections are regular, transparent and open to the participation of every sector of Malian society.

**Ms. Wronecka** (Poland): I would first like to thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his valuable briefing on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), as well as Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA, for his work in extremely difficult circumstances. We commend MINUSMA's mediation efforts and call on it to further strengthen its exercise of its good offices, in accordance with its mandate.

(*spoke in French*)

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the presence here today of His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali.

(*spoke in English*)

Poland has been following the political situation in Mali and the Sahel closely. It is currently one of the world's most critical regions in the fight against

international terrorism. We share the concerns about the deteriorating security situation in the North and in central Mali in particular, with its spillover effects on Mali's neighbours. Stabilizing Mali politically and ensuring its territorial integrity will be crucial to maintaining peace and stability in the Sahel region. In the more than two and a half years since the signing of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, many of its provisions are still relevant. Building trust and overcoming barriers between the Government and other national stakeholders are essential to facilitating the electoral process. In that regard, we welcome the President of Mali's assurances that all the elections scheduled for 2018 — presidential, legislative and local — will be held in accordance with the constitutionally mandated deadlines. We should all realize that organizing elections in such an unstable security environment is challenging. Women should be included in every decision-making body related to the peace process, and I therefore welcome the compliance of all the political parties with the 30 per cent quota requirement for women in elective functions, as well as the representation of young people on the lists submitted for local and regional elections.

We encourage the Government of Mali to finalize a strategy for developing northern Mali and formulating a national emergency plan, as well as to adopt a timeline for implementing the Agreement, as part of the trust-building efforts among the stakeholders in the peace process. Constitutional revisions, security and justice reforms and a process of centralization are only some of the issues that must be addressed soon. We hope that the relevant African political actors and institutions, such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the African Development Bank and Mali's neighbours will continue their mediation efforts and support action aimed at effectively implementing the Malian peace process.

As a member of the European Union (EU), Poland welcomes the possibility of further cooperation with MINUSMA in the context of the operationalization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five (G-5) for the Sahel, based on resolution 2391 (2017). Progress is being made on efforts to conclude a technical agreement as soon as possible between the United Nations, the EU and the G-5 Sahel States.

In conclusion, Poland encourages all the parties in Mali to continue further political dialogue. We would also like to offer our full support to Special Representative Annadif and look forward to the conclusions of the upcoming MINUSMA strategic review.

**Mr. Shen Bo** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes Mr. Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, to today's meeting, and congratulates him on his assumption of his new role. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing.

China appreciates and supports the people of Mali and express its support to them in their determined efforts to actively advance their peace process and implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Since the signing of the Peace Agreement, the Government of Mali, signatory armed groups and the relevant parties have made tremendous efforts to implement it, which has produced ongoing progress. China welcomes those developments.

Last October, a Security Council mission visited Mali and held fruitful talks with the relevant parties. At the same time, the current security situation in Mali continues to worsen. Terrorist activity in Mali and neighbouring areas is rampant, thereby seriously affecting the peace process. The international community should strengthen its efforts to support Mali's peace and reconciliation process and help the country achieve security, stability and economic and social development.

First, the international community should support the Malian parties to implement the Peace Agreement. China hopes that all parties to the Agreement will continue to demonstrate political will, fully implement the Agreement's provisions and jointly commit themselves to national development and reconstruction. The interim administration in northern Mali should provide basic services as soon as possible so that people in the region can lead better lives and enjoy a peace dividend. That will help to win the hearts of the people for the peace process. The international community should continue to help Mali to enhance its capacity for self-development and governance, on the basis of respecting Mali's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Secondly, the international community should help the Government of Mali to enhance its capacity in the areas of security and counter-terrorism efforts. It should also provide assistance to the Government, at its request, in order to enable it to respond to security

challenges throughout its territory and gradually assume its responsibility for national security.

With regard to the rampant terrorist activity, measures must be taken to adopt integrated steps to respond through regional cooperation. China welcomes the efforts of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and other regional mechanisms and supports the establishment of a Joint Force to independently deal with regional security challenges. China urges the international community to respect the leading role of Africa in dealing with its own problems. China actively supports countries of the region in their effort to respond to the cross-border threats posed by terrorism and organized crime.

Thirdly, the international community should support the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). China thanks MINUSMA and Special Representative Annadif for their tireless efforts to help to advance peace and reconciliation in Mali. China hopes that MINUSMA will continue to coordinate and cooperate with the Government of Mali, respect Mali's suggestions and help the country strengthen its security capacity and assist with disarmament and reintegration efforts. MINUSMA is deployed in a complex and dangerous environment. Its peacekeepers are being attacked regularly, which is a severe safety and security issue.

There has recently been some improvement with regard to MINUSMA's equipment, but resources and capacity are still lagging. We hope that MINUSMA will continue to strengthen safety and security for its personnel and enhance communication with troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and other parties providing assistance in order to ensure that MINUSMA has the necessary equipment and resources to implement its mandate and defend itself. China thanks the Secretariat for its timely briefings on MINUSMA support for the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. We hope that it will continue to advance relevant work in that regard.

China firmly supports Mali in its efforts towards peace and development. China is an important TCC in MINUSMA, with nearly 400 peacekeepers deployed. We would like to work with the international community to continue to support Mali's peace and reconciliation process and to make our contribution to Mali's achievement of peace, stability and development.

**Ms. Guadey** (Ethiopia): I wish to start by expressing our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in Mali and on the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We continue to appreciate all of the efforts and sacrifices being made by MINUSMA peacekeepers, who, as we all know, operate under extremely difficult circumstances and continuously face asymetrial attacks by terrorists. They certainly deserve our support and solidarity. We are also pleased to see the new Foreign Minister of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Coulibaly. We look forward to hearing his maiden statement to the Security Council.

We note with satisfaction that no ceasefire violations by signatories to the greement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali have been reported since the previous briefing (see S/PV.8062). It is also encouraging that Malian political actors have been able to achive key stabilization objectives for the succesful establishment of interim authorities in all northern regions of the country and the launching of mixed patrols in Gao. Their discussions on finding a political settlement to the ongoing intercommunal conflict is also worth noting.

On the other hand, the challenges that Mali faces in relation to the deteriorating security situation remain a source of serious concern. In northern and central Mali, the repeated targeting of Malian civilian authorities by terrorists clearly serves to indicate their destructive intention to undermine State authority. We note from the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/1105) that the number of State officials redeployed to those regions showed a decreasing trend because of the prevailing insecurity. Reversing that situation is a major challenge, as observed during the Council's visit in October. There is no doubt that there is need for additional enhanced efforts to extend State authority in all territories of Mali.

With regard to the expansion of social services, the rehabilitation of health centres and schools and the digging of bore holes in the regions of Timbuktu, Ménaka, Gao and Taoudénni through domestic financing is encouraging. We call on international partners to help bridge funding gaps for the rehabilitation of infrastructure and equipment, which is a serious challenge that continues to affect the speed of the recovery process in the country.

We appreciate that the Peacebuilding Fund allocated a significant amount of resources to address the deteriorating security situation in the Ségou

and Mopti regions, including for reconciliation and conflict prevention.

Improving the logistics nightmare by opening the Cotonou-Niamey-Gao supply route in order to service camps in eastern and northern Mali, as well as the new centralized warehouse facility in Gao, has been a landmark achievement, as the whole process will significantly improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance and goods to the regions.

Strengthening of cooperation between the Malian armed forces and MINUSMA in the conduct of coordinated operations, logistics and operational support, including information- and intelligence-sharing, as well as planning and training, remain critical. It is only through such cooperation by MINUSMA and support by the United Nations country team that the Sustainable Development Goals in terms of a structural transformation of the economy and consolidating governance and security capacity can be achieved. In that spirit, we strongly support efforts in addressing the root causes of conflict through investment and job creation in the country.

The peace and security of Mali is closely linked with that of the region. The Security Council's continued support to the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force remains vital. We are pleased to note that the Joint Force achieved initial operational capability in October and has conducted its first operation — in the tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, from 27 October to 11 November 2017.

Finally, we welcome the renewed commitment by the Malian parties to the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and the understanding they have reached on the revised timeline for the implementation of the outstanding provisions by the end of March. It is absolutely essential that the parties abide by their commitment to respect the timelines. As agreed by the Council, action must be taken with regard to those who are found to be obstructing the timely, full and effectively implementation of the Agreement. We hope that the Council will send a unified message to the Malian parties calling on them to fulfil their obligations under the Peace Agreement and accelerate its implementation.

**Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to welcome to New York and to the Security Council His Excellency Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali. His presence among us today attests to the importance that His Excellency President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and his Government accord to the support of the Security Council and the international community to achieve the goals of stabilizing and normalizing the situation in the country. We ask Minister Coulibaly that he accept our sincerest congratulations on his recent appointment at the healm of Malian diplomacy.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea thanks the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, for presenting to us the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/1105) on the current situation in the Republic of Mali in a detailed and clear manner — as is his custom. Today's briefing is taking place 12 days following the briefing (see S/PV.8156) by Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel. Both that briefing, in which Mali was referenced as part of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), and today's on Mali specifically, are cause for serious concern. We therefore call on all political stakeholders in Mali to continue to capitalize on efforts by the members of the Security Council, including the visit to the region in late 2017, as well as the facilitation roles of Algeria and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

The Agreement Monitoring Committee designated the Carter Center as an independent observer responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. In resolution 2391 (2017), adopted on 8 December 2017, the Security Council renewed its urgent call on the parties to take concrete actions in connection with the operationalization of interim authorities in northern Mali, the establishment of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Kidal and Timbuktu, and to carry out the launching of the cantonment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, while also ensuring women's participation.

Meanwhile, as we observe the lack of significant progress with great concern in implementing the Agreement, terrorist groups continue their ferocious attacks against MINUSMA and the French and Malian forces in the central, southern and northern parts of Mali. As a consequence of those attacks, almost 100 members of MINUSMA have lost their lives since 2013. Given the situation, our delegation believes that

all measures needed to strengthen MINUSMA must be taken so that it can fulfil its mandate effectively, while also improving safety and security for its personnel.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea calls on all the parties concerned and those signatory to the Agreement, which was established two and a half years ago, to make the effort necessary for its implementation in a spirit of trust and with a shared vision of restoring peace and security in Mali, as a prerequisite for facing the challenges that the country will encounter in 2018, namely, ensuring that progress is made in a critical presidential election cycle scheduled for July and in legislative elections scheduled for November, for which a common political strategy will be needed, during which the international community will have to provide the necessary support for the Government of Mali to achieve that goal.

In that regard, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea commends the work of the International Organization of La Francophonie, which identified needs concerning the elections with a view towards providing all the necessary support, for which it dispatched the former Prime Minister of Djibouti, Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, to Mali in November 2017 so that he could define those areas for which La Francophonie could provide support. We encourage La Francophonie to pursue its work and raise awareness of other partners so that they will join those efforts to ensure the support needed for the holding of planned elections throughout this year.

Notwithstanding the efforts aimed at supporting our Malian partners, I reiterate how important it is that the political will of all political actors prevail in putting Mali first and implementing the Peace Agreement, as well as taking advantage of all the support extended to the country, including in combating terrorist groups, establishing security throughout the country and holding successful elections, which will begin a new political chapter in the political life of Mali. MINUSMA will play a key role during that new decisive phase in order to ensure its successful completion.

**Mr. Van Oosterom** (Netherlands) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to thank the Under-Secretary-General for his briefing. I also join colleagues in warmly welcoming the new Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Coulibaly. The leadership of Under-Secretary-General Lacroix and of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Annadif are truly worthy of admiration, as are the dedication and perseverance of the Mission personnel, in the complex environment of Mali. I also pay tribute to all those who have paid the ultimate price in their efforts to establish peace in Mali, including the brave soldiers from the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands has been involved in Mali for a long time. We are, and will remain, committed to Mali. As needed, we will contribute development assistance, diplomacy and our contribution to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

According to a Malian proverb, all those who paddle in the same boat have the same goal. More than ever before, for the international community, it is essential that all stakeholders be motivated by a common goal: peace in Mali. The year 2018 will be pivotal for Mali. Elections will be an important test in renewing the legitimacy of Mali's leaders. I would like to make three points: on the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and on good governance.

First, concerning the peace process, swift progress in the inclusive implementation of the Peace Agreement is urgently needed. The timeline adopted last week was welcome progress, and we must adhere to it during the next two months. The Netherlands welcomes the support and mediation provided by the international community, the European Union and, especially, MINUSMA, thanks to which we have been able to move forward. Such international support remains crucial. Furthermore, the appointment of the independent observer and the Security Council's sanctions regime pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) are vital components for achieving tangible results in 2018. We must not hesitate to use the tools provided by the sanctions regime when they are needed to promote progress.

Secondly, concerning the G-5 Joint Force and the capacity of MINUSMA, in a short time, the central part of Mali has become a hotbed of terrorism, intercommunal violence, illegal migration and organized crime, which seriously threaten the stability of Mali, the broader Sahel region and even Europe. The link between terrorism and transnational organized crime is toxic in its effect. It is for that reason that resolution 2364 (2017) quite rightly calls upon Member States to combat illicit activities, such as drug trafficking, trafficking in

migrants and trafficking in persons. Such challenges deserve the Council's full attention. The Netherlands therefore welcomes the establishment of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. However, it is important to ensure the rapid and sustainable implementation of a sound regulatory framework in order to prevent the occurrence of all human rights violations. If we fail to guarantee respect for human rights and human dignity, including with regard to detention and judicial proceedings, we will raise a new generation of terrorists, instead of eliminating them.

The crisis in central Mali exerts greater pressure on the capabilities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). To date, it remains the peacekeeping mission with the highest number of victims among Blue Helmets, which only serves to underscore the crucial importance of high-quality equipment and well-trained troops.

Based on our experience in Mali, the Netherlands has learned the importance of a well-trained troop contingent, quality equipment and operations that are conducted with reliable information. We would like to underscore in particular the importance of using innovative force-generation methods, such as rotation plans. We call upon the Secretariat to continue efforts to ensure the availability and sustainability of equipment, which is vital for the Mission's effectiveness. We call upon Member States to provide capacity to MINUSMA. During our presidency of the Security Council in two months' time, the modernization of peacekeeping operations will be the subject of our open debate on 28 March.

Thirdly, the coming year will be crucial as it pertains to good governance. In that regard, Bamako will play the most important role in providing sound leadership that will allow for inclusive and transparent dialogue ahead of elections. It is also important that women and young people be fully involved in the implementation of the Agreement. We commend the support provided by MINUSMA for the holding of legitimate elections. In order to enhance accountability and reconciliation, it is essential that the Malian Government commit to addressing human rights abuses and that it be supported in that endeavour. The Malian parties must commit to implementing urgent reforms, such as decentralization and security sector reform, that address the root causes of the crisis. We must prove to the Malian people that there are peace dividends to be reaped.

In conclusion, Mali and its people are faced with myriad challenges. MINUSMA must therefore work simultaneously at various levels. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is fully committed to Mali, peace, justice and development. Nonetheless, it is only with the full commitment of parties in Mali and of the international community that we will be able to build sustainable peace in Mali. The Kingdom of the Netherlands will remain the Council's partner in that endeavour.

**Ms. Sison** (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his briefing. I would like to welcome Foreign Minister Coulibaly and, on behalf of the United States, congratulate him on his re-appointment. We look forward to working closely with him.

As Ambassador Haley has said, it is our priority to see enduring peace and security for all of Mali's citizens, as well as stability in the region. The upcoming local and presidential elections should not prevent or delay the Government and signatory parties from pursuing the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We believe the Peace Agreement remains Mali's best hope of building a future stable enough to support peaceful political transition. The United States takes positive yet cautious note of the September commitments reached by signatory parties to not return to the battlefield. We are encouraged by the absence of ceasefire violations and call upon all signatory parties to take advantage of the momentum.

However, we are disappointed by the lack of substantive progress on major elements of the Peace Agreement. Interim authorities may be operational but we have yet to see the fruits of effective governance in the regions. Mixed patrols took place in Gao but do not provide regular security back-up there. The continuing standoff with regard to the criteria and numbers of combatants to be submitted for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration reflect a serious lack of trust among parties and suggest a need for additional confidence-building measures.

In a country fraught with a growing regional threat of violent extremism and transnational organized crime, parties must adopt a renewed sense of urgency to make progress together on key security provisions of the Agreement. Mali's collective security must be arrived at collectively, with input and collaboration among all parties. The Peace Agreement is the signed road map for the parties to get there and the

Agreement's deliberative bodies provide the forums for debate on issues related to security and much more. Unilateral endeavours outside those forums can lead to misunderstanding and mistrust.

The parties' most recent timeline for progress agreed to earlier this month, in particular on the security provisions of the Agreement over the next few weeks and months, is a positive sign. However, if there is still no progress by the Council's next quarterly meeting, we should be prepared to consider action through the sanctions regime we unanimously adopted last September.

Unfortunately, we must also take note of the increased frequency, magnitude and lethality of attacks on both United Nations and Malian targets, which rose by one third as compared to the previous reporting period. That unacceptable number of troop deaths demands that we take a long, hard look at the current configuration of the United Nations in Mali.

We hope the Secretary-General's strategic review, in tandem with the Council's requests and resolution 2364 (2017) for a strategic prioritization plan for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), will deliver recommendations ahead of the Mission's renewal that will bolster mission security, elevate its most crucial tasks and increase its operational effectiveness. The Mission's ongoing efforts to implement recent recommendations to improve security, which are crucial in the light of MINUSMA's unacceptably high casualty rate, will help in that effort. However, MINUSMA's chronic shortage of forces and resources remains a matter of concern.

We must find an enduring solution for the most critical capability gaps, such as those related to combat convoy battalions, helicopters and armoured personnel carriers. In the most dangerous of peacekeeping missions, the United Nations, troop- and police-contributing countries and all Member States must work together to find a sustainable solution that will save peacekeepers' lives and bring peace closer in Mali. The United States applauds the efforts of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) in establishing its Joint Force. We are also pleased to hear of the progress of the United Nations in the development of the technical agreement. Pledges already made and those to be made at the upcoming 23 February donors' conference in Brussels will be critical to reimbursing MINUSMA's support through the Agreement. We would like to reiterate the Council's appeal in resolution 2391 (2017) that the technical agreement be a temporary measure to bring about the G-5 Sahel's self-sufficiency and not adversely impact MINUSMA's operations and personnel.

The United States pledge of $60 million specifically for the operationalization of the Joint Force will continue through its robust bilateral security assistance for the G-5 Sahel States, which totalled $1 billion in the past five years. We also applaud the efforts of the United Nations and the G-5 Sahel towards the development of a human rights compliance framework as a key component in respecting human rights and avoiding alienating local communities in the battle against the violence and recruitment of violent extremists.

The United States believes that even in a challenging electoral year, with the continued regional threat of terrorism, the parties to Mali's Peace Agreement, along with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and its partners, can work together to achieve concrete progress in the coming weeks and months. That progress, or the lack thereof, will be of paramount interest to the United States and the Security Council. For the people of Mali, and for Mali's friends in the region and beyond, the stakes are too high to delay progress any longer.

**Mr. Hickey** (United Kingdom): I too would like to thank the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive report on the situation in Mali (S/2017/1105), and Mr. Lacroix, for so clearly setting out the report's findings during his briefing. I would also like to welcome Foreign Minister Coulibaly to the Council today.

Let me start by echoing the words of my Ethiopian colleague and welcoming the absence of violence between the signatory parties in Mali during this reporting period. Such conditions represent the best chance for the successful implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We commend all the parties for their continued commitment to a definitive cessation of hostilities and urge them to remain committed.

The United Kingdom strongly supports the Agreement and the ongoing dialogue between the parties. We welcome the adoption of a revised timetable at the meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee last week. We strongly encourage all parties to reaffirm their commitment to the Agreement and to work together to implement the outstanding actions, as outlined by

them in the latest timetable, as soon as possible. It has now been more than two and a half years since the Agreement was signed. Like many other Council members, we are frustrated by the lack of meaningful substantive progress made in implementing it, and we urge all parties to speed that up. The Malian people's patience is not infinite and it is incumbent on all parties to deliver in good faith on the commitments they made in the Agreement. We welcome the appointment and participation of the Carter Center as an independent observer on the Agreement Monitoring Committee and hope it will lead to greater accountability for the delays in implementation. We will work with the international community to identify those who seek to block or prevent full implementation of the Peace Agreement, which now constitutes a basis for sanctions designations.

Elections are crucial to delivering on the promise of decentralization in Mali and are central to the Peace Agreement. It is disappointing that the local elections have been delayed, and it will be crucial to ensure that credible and fair local, presidential and parliamentary elections are delivered in 2018.

While we recognize that the best route to long-term stability in Mali is through implementation of the Peace Agreement, the security situation today remains poor and stabilizing the region is urgent. The United Kingdom is taking action in three ways to contribute to that. First, as our Prime Minister announced last week, we will be deploying three British Chinook helicopters to the Sahel and we will continue the support we offer through our heavy-lift transport aircraft, increasing the ability of French troops to manoeuvre efficiently in their battle against extremists. Secondly, the United Kingdom will provide an additional $17 million in aid to the region, including lifesaving humanitarian support for the hundreds of thousands of people affected by epidemics, natural disasters and conflict. Thirdly, we will continue to support the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and its mandate to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement, including the redeployment of reformed and reconstituted Malian defence and security forces and the protection of civilians.

We look forward to the upcoming strategic review of MINUSMA, which will be crucial to establishing the future direction of peacekeeping support to Mali. We also reiterate our support for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and its objectives of tackling terrorism, organized crime, people-smuggling and human trafficking in the region. We welcome the support of the international community in pledging funding for that initiative. We recognize the importance of MINUSMA's technical and logistical support to the G-5 Joint Force in helping it get up to full capacity, and we encourage the swift implementation of a technical agreement to enable this. We also reiterate the calls of the Security Council for the implementation of a robust human rights compliance framework by the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. We recall, however, that the Joint Force was not created solely as a military force and that there is no exclusive military solution to insecurity in the cross-border regions. G-5 cooperation with MINUSMA on development and humanitarian efforts will be crucial.

In conclusion, we welcome the positive steps made since the last Council meeting on this subject (see S/PV.8062), including the reduction in violence, but now is the time to see meaningful progress and action to implement the Peace Agreement. That is the only way to achieve lasting peace and security in Mali and the region.

**Mr. Iliichev** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix for his detailed briefing, and we welcome the participation in today's meeting of Mr. Tiéman Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali.

We noted the signing on 20 September by the parties in Mali of a memorandum on a cessation of hostilities and the subsequent halt to the fighting between the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform coalition of armed groups. We also took positive note of the meeting held in Anéfis in October on intercommunal reconciliation among the Malian parties. Nor should we omit to mention the completed establishment of all the interim administrations for all five of the country's northern regions. We hope that Mali's decision to postpone the municipal and regional elections until April, taken with the active mediation of Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, will enable a more inclusive political process.

Despite those positives, we are concerned about the delays in implementing the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, including the processes of cantonment and security-sector reform. We welcome the agreements reached by the Malian parties just last

week on renewing the timetable for implementing the Algiers Agreement. Now they must be implemented.

Unfortunately, the security situation is now deteriorating, not because of the Malian parties but rather as a result of an increase in terrorist activity. We are worried about the geographical expansion of their activity, as well as the growing losses among Malian security forces and Blue Helmets. In that regard, we welcome the commitment of the countries of the region to establishing the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, and we participated in coming up with a balanced Security Council resolution to support them (S/2017/2391). However, we share the Secretariat's view that it will be impossible to stabilize the region without full implementation of the Agreement by Mali's stakeholders. We should never forget that the collapse of the security situation in the Sahel followed the 2011 foreign intervention in Libya that led to the de facto dismantling of the Libyan State.

We welcome the strengthening of the military and police components of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We call on the Secretariat to take additional measures to provide peacekeepers with armoured personnel carriers and attack and transport helicopters, as well as to improve the Blue Helmets' security. We expect the Mission to finally reach full operational readiness in 2018. Taking into account the Malian Government's position, we helped to adopt resolution 2364 (2017), which defined the specific tasks of MINUSMA in assisting the country's security forces. It is important to note that a memorandum on this specific issue was signed in November.

Taking the wishes of Bamako into consideration, Russia also supported the adoption of resolution 2374 (2017), which imposed a sanctions regime on individuals who sabotage the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We share the desire of the Malians to speed up the stabilization of the northern regions. At the same time, we would like to warn once again that using the threat of sanctions has its own collateral effects. We hope that that step of the Security Council does not lead to the hostility from the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad and the Platform coalition of armed groups and increased mistrust among the Malian parties. We also hope that the established sanctions mechanisms will be used only as intended, namely, to contribute to the political process and the stabilization of the country.

**The President**: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Kazakhstan.

We join others in expressing appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for his comprehensive briefing and we welcome the presence of Mr. Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali, in the Chamber. We endorse the Secretary-General's quarterly report (S/2017/1105), and wish to follow up with some observations.

The key step is to prioritize the full and inclusive implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. We encourage all parties to comply with the recently revised timeline for implementing the remaining provisions of the Agreement.

We believe that the assistance of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and of the international community is crucial to ensure the transparent, fair and peaceful conduct of the 2018 elections, as they, in turn, will facilitate realizing the Agreement.

Likewise, it is necessary to establish, through reform, the foundations for a stable rule of law, reinforced by independent and accountable judicial and security institutions. We also appreciate the United Nations efforts to ensure accountability and to fight impunity by the creation of the International Commission of Inquiry. The genuine inclusion of women in the peace process and in decision-making is another important measure for enduring stability.

Kazakhstan is alarmed by the security and humanitarian situations, which have significantly deteriorated, and calls on international partners and donors to provide the pledged humanitarian aid. We believe that the upcoming strategic review of MINUSMA will contribute to enhancing the Mission's capabilities and to improving the security situation.

We are pleased to note the strengthened cooperation among MINUSMA, the African Union, the European Union and the Sahel countries in combating terrorism and other cross-border threats, and commend international partners for mobilizing financial support for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

Finally, to address the root causes of conflict in Mali, military operations must go hand in hand with well-integrated and coordinated development efforts, reinforced by sustainable funding. In that regard, we

fully support the projects of the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as the Government's multidimensional strategy for the central regions, and call for the finalizing of the development agenda for the northern regions.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

**Mr. Coulibaly** (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, to express the satisfaction of the delegation of Mali in seeing, your country, Mr. President — Kazkahstan — preside over the Security Council for this month of January. At the same time, I would like to congratulate Japan on its outstanding conduct of the Council's work during the past month.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his tireless efforts to implement the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and for the operationalization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel — two guarantees for lasting stability throughout the region.

I would like to express our warm congratulations to the newly elected members of the Council, namely, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, Peru and Poland, and assure them of our full and complete cooperation for the success of their work in the service of peace. I would also like to express our deep gratitude to the delegations of Egypt, Japan, Senegal, Ukraine and Uruguay for their excellent contribution in the pursuit of solutions to the emerging challenges related to, inter alia, environmental degradation, irregular migration, trafficking of all kinds, and the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, as well as the repeated asymmetric attacks targeting United Nations peacekeeping forces in the fulfilment of their mandates.

In the same vein, I would like to congratulate Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his excellent presentation of the report under consideration (S/2017/1105).

The Government of Mali takes note of the report of the Secretary-General and is pleased with the quality of the cooperation between the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the Government of the Republic of Mali. That is demonstrated by the existence of mechanisms between the two parties to evaluate the criteria for monitoring the implementation of the Agreement, as well as in the area of human rights.

The Government of Mali fully supports the Secretary-General's assessment that undeniable progress has been made at the political and institutional levels and with regard to defence, security, justice and economic development issues, as well as the provision of basic social services.

We see that progress as a source of encouragement for the Malian parties and for all our partners, whose assistance and multifaceted support are particularly appreciated. Without needing to recall the long list of those developments, which reflect the will and commitment of the Government of Mali, under the authority of the Head of State, I would simply like to underscore that such progress contributes to the gradual restoration of peace and security in our country.

However, time is in short supply. I would like to reaffirm the determination of the President of the Republic of Mali to make every effort to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement, for we remain deeply convinced that there is no alternative to that peaceful way for the lasting settlement of the complex crisis in Mali. With regard to the prospects for 2018 in connection with the implementation of the Agreement, the Government of Mali will continue its efforts to maintain the climate of increasing trust between the signatory parties and to initiate a draft law on national agreement in order to take up the proposals of the national conference of understanding.

Anxious to meet the deep aspirations of all our people, the Head of State has assigned the new Government team the following four priorities: completion of the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation; containment of the increasing insecurity in the centre of the country; meeting social demands by accelerating the implementation of the presidential programme on urgent social needs; and the organization of transparent, credible and peaceful elections. As the Security Council can see, the implementation of the Agreement is at the top of the President's priorities.

The initiative of the Head of State to launch the adoption process for the law on national understanding, in line with implementing the charter for peace, unity and national reconciliation issued as the outcome of the national conference of understanding, is also part of that

dynamic. That law seeks to rebuild the social fabric and national unity and to strengthen reconciliation among Malians by means of the exemption from prosecution of all those involved in armed rebellion but who have no blood on their hands; measures to restore calm after accelerating the trials under way and granting reparations to recognized victims; and a reintegration programme for all those who lay down their arms and publically and frankly commit to renouncing violence. In that way, the Government will rapidly initiate a draft law on national understanding that will reflect those proposals.

It is because time is in short supply that, in addition to that bold initiative of the President, the Government will also seek to expedite the implementation of political and institutional reforms, of the cantonment and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, security sector reform, as well as the return of refugees and displaced persons.

I also mention the holding, on 15 and 16 January, of the twenty-third session of the Agreement Monitoring Committee in Mali, which welcomed and validated the timeline of priority actions selected by the Malian parties. The timeline provides a road map for implementing key provisions of the Agreement that are conducive to stabilizing the country and holding forthcoming elections. The Committee urged the Malian parties to respect the commitments made and encouraged the international community to provide support in that regard.

In order to ensure greater efficiency in the dialogue among the parties to the Agreement, the Malian parties have agreed to the future participation of MINUSMA and the lead partner of the international mediation at the meetings of the inter-Malian discussion mechanism as observers. All the details of this timeline are annexed to the updated memorandum on the actions undertaken by the Government and were distributed as Security Council documents.

One of the major challenges to the stabilization of our country lies in meeting the political deadlines to come. The sovereign decision of the Government of Mali to postpone the elections, initially scheduled for December 2017, to 2018 is due to the concern for inclusiveness and openness of the top Malian authorities with a view to creating an environment that is most conducive to holding those elections. I take this opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the Government of Mali to organizing free, credible and transparent elections within the constitutional deadlines and throughout the national territory — taking into account the law on gender so as to ensure the representativeness of women in elected positions.

In addition, the Government is making every effort to implement the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. In that connection, it should be recalled that, out of the $50 million earmarked for the implementation of the programme, the Government of Mali, despite its limited resources, financed $10 million of its own funds to supplement the $15 million dollars provided by the World Bank, which I commend. I hope that, with the support of other partners, the gap will soon be bridged.

In the same vein, I am pleased to report that the National Security Sector Reform Council has already prepared a road map for the finalization of the national security sector reform strategy. In that connection, at the latest meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee both signatory parties undertook to finalize, before 2 February, the consensual criteria and quotas for the integration of ex-combatants within the national army.

In addition to improving security conditions in the northern regions of the country, the Government attaches particular importance to the situation in the central regions of Mali, particularly the regions of Mopti and Ségou. Repeated attacks on civilians and State officials undermine efforts to restore State authority over the territory and hinder the provision by the State of basic social services to our fellow citizens in those regions.

This is a major challenge that the Government intends to address through the rapid acceleration of the effective operationalization of the integrated security plan for the central regions, in order to guarantee the peace of mind that would enable the effective return of the administration to that part of the country, thereby enabling children to go to school in peace and the people to go about their business normally. Likewise, the Government will immediately organize an inclusive political dialogue on the security situation in the centre of the country.

With regard to the human rights situation referred to in the report of the Secretary-General under consideration, I note that the establishment of a ministry fully dedicated to human rights in successive Governments illustrates the unwavering political will

of Malian authorities for the promotion and protection of human rights. Despite the difficult situation in Mali, the Government has committed itself to that task. I can report to the Council that the Minister of Justice has already given instructions to the judicial authorities in affected jurisdictions to open investigations and inquiries into allegations of human rights violations set out in the report, including cases of forced disappearances, arrests and arbitrary detentions. Those efforts are possible thanks to the dynamic cooperation of the Ministries of Justice and Human Rights with the Human Rights Division of MINUSMA.

As for the humanitarian situation, it should be noted that the Government of Mali is resolutely committed to meeting the challenges related to the return of displaced persons and refugees in optimal conditions; providing access for people affected by the crisis to basic social services, including education, health, nutrition, water, hygiene and sanitation; and improving the livelihoods and resilience of the people. Moreover, the Lycée de Kidal was reopened for the school year 2017-2018 and the State effectively returned in all the regional capitals of the North and the main towns in the region.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations and to all other humanitarian actors operating in Mali, which continue to provide assistance to refugees, displaced persons and those left behind in crisis-affected areas.

With regard to MINUSMA-related security, the Government of Mali renews its request to strengthen the operational capabilities of the United Nations Mission in Mali so as to allow it to fully discharge its mandate. For my part, I welcome the signing, on 8 November 2017, of the memorandum of understanding between MINUSMA and the Government of Mali on the Mission's support for the Malian armed forces. We call for the diligent implementation of the memorandum, with a view to creating the conditions for the restoration of State authority throughout the national territory, in particular by allowing the return of the Administration and the defence and security forces to all northern regions, including Kidal.

At the regional level, Mali welcomes the progress made in the process of operationalizing the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. I welcome the support of the Council and of all bilateral and multilateral partners for the Force.

While the Malian presidency will end in the coming weeks, Mali remains fully committed to the security and development goals of the Organization. We must hasten the signing of the technical agreement that we discussed here this morning and pursue the mobilization efforts of all bilateral and multilateral partners for this security project that is critical for the Group of Five for the Sahel countries and, above all, enhances all efforts made since the beginning of the Malian crisis — especially in the context of the spread of the terrorist threat.

In conclusion, I reiterate the thanks and gratitude of Mali and its President to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative in Mali and all MINUSMA personnel, as well as to the troop-contributing countries, the French force Barkhane, the European training mission and the members of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, led by Algeria, for their tireless support for the peace and stabilization process in our country.

The Government of Mali strongly condemns all cowardly and barbaric attacks on national and international forces and on civilians. I reiterate our condolences to the families of all victims — civilian and military, foreign and Malian — who have fallen in the fight against terrorism on the field of honour in Mali and elsewhere.

*The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.*